1878
A Present
to the
Editor
from
the Author

Elementary Philosophy.

by William Safford.

280

"Harmonial Philosophy."

By a Shaker.

To the Editor of "Human Natures."

In the June No. one of your Correspondents (A. Gardner) asks: "Will any one of your readers ... try to explain to me, and all the world, what is meant by Harmonial Philosophy?" With your kind permission, I will "try," although I have never read a page upon that subject: howbeit I have seen an advertisement of a work bearing that title, and have heard some pretty eulogiums & commendations thereon. I will be as brief as shall be consistent with the magnitude of the subject, and considering that "all the world," including, of course, A. G. and yourself is to be illumed & satisfied with my explanation, or more properly my views of "Harmonial Philosophy," given entirely irrespective of the views of other persons.

With A. G. "Harmonial Philosophy" and "Communism" are synonyms. He, however, does not seem to see much philosophy in Commun-

nisms. Nor do I believe that harmony is quite the thing he would secure by his present notions of "liberty and fraternity." Let us repeat, and, for a moment, look at some of his objections to the "Communism" he fears is about to be established in New Zealand, where, until recently, they used to eat up entirely those who were fortunate enough to possess fairer colored skins than themselves. "Communism" in New Zealand is a broad hint that the New Zealanders have greatly improved since the good Bishop Selwyn went there. Evidently a better future is before them. I recommend A. G, and all other lovers of "liberty and fraternity," and especially lovers of "equality," to zealously help it along; and, if possible, convert even "the devil" himself, as well as all his apostles and followers, who love self so much better than their neighbor, that they would rather live upon the cost of others, than share only equally with them in all the necessaries and comforts of life.

A. G. objects to "auricular confession." — There can surely be no very good reason for this, in the mind of any one who neither does, nor intends to do, any wrong; for in that case he would have none to confess. And even should a man, at any time, make a slip in his manners, by words or deeds, which might be, by his consociates or himself, thought and felt to be a departure from right, the acknowledgment thereof viva voce would surely be considered not only an atonement, but an honorable act, much to be approved by all, and would be extremely beneficial to the offender. — For proof, I advise A. G. to experiment a little upon it.

He objects to "Celibacy," and to "Communism," and says, he is "already too much of a Communist per force. What I need is more freedom, not more bondage. But, under that system, we would have to groan, being burdened with all our earnings going

where we should have no control over them."
According to this logic, A. Gardner's views
would seem to be, that a married man is
more free than a celibate; and that he who
has the burthen, charge, care, & responsibility
of others' interests, as well as his own, has less
"bondage," and has less need of concern, or
anxiety, than he whose burden is borne by
some one else. I confess I did not find
it so, during the many years I stood, in re-
lation to others, as husband, father, and
"master!" I guess our friend does'nt know
much of the responsibilities of a business
life, or of the "bondage", cares, &c. that unav-
oidably subsist where there are husband &
wife, and father and children, and employer
and employes.

A. G. objects to "Communism because
it is more binding than all other kinds of rule,
however despotic." He does'nt see that the
voluntary binding of a number of persons to
certain salutary & protective laws & orders,

for the good of the whole Community, is the conservation of the members from infractions of their individual personal rights; and can appear "despotic" to only those who desire to be more or less lawless, refractory, unjust, or untrue to the Community. He says: "Community has often enough been weighed in the balance, and found wanting." That is very true; and it will be so in all future Communities, should the same cause prevail, namely, the effort to found them upon the same principles and customs as prevail in the world generally, and which give rise to all the multifarious antagonisms, and consequent divisions & strife that exist outside "Communism." Yet "Communism" will be found to be right and good, when only the right kind of persons, with good characters, and right motives, shall unite upon right principles, free from self-seeking — each member aiming to be a benefit & blessing to all the rest.

A. Gardner then, rather abruptly winds up with: "Let us have liberty and fraternity, and let the devil take equality." A little too coarse, don't you think, friend Gardner, in so unique a publication as "Human Nature." To me, friend Editor, this looks somewhat as if your Correspondent had an itching for something more than he would allow others to possess. This - not "equality" - is just the position that is taken by his Satanic majesty (towards whom A. G. appears to have a large amount of personal esteem, or surely he would not so respectfully and heartily hand over to him a boon so invaluable and estimable in the feelings of all sensible, neighbor-loving persons), and all other majesties, and all of their subjects, who advocate "liberty" without "equality" which must of necessity produce more or less anarchy, and chaos, as well as a great deal of poverty and suffering.

But how "liberty and fraternity" are to be secured without "equality," perhaps our friend Gardner will be kind enough to inform "all the world," in some future No. of *Human Nature*; and should he make out a good case, and show the true meaning and import of the "golden law" he has so aptly cited— "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"— he may take a position among "harmonial philosophers."

Now, friend Editor, I will "try" to answer the question put by your Correspondent— "What is meant by Harmonial Philosophy?"— which, were A. G. and less than "all the world" willing it should be so, might possibly prove to be the veritable "darling baby that shall grow up to be the the Saviour of the world."

"Harmonial Philosophy" are two very significant terms. I scarcely know which of them— the noun or the adjective— possesses the most meaning or importance

to humans. That philosophy, however, which can produce the most harmony among mankind, must surely be "harmonial"; and that philosophy (!) which cannot effect a harmonious condition or state of society, cannot, with any propriety, be called "Harmonial Philosophy." The same may be said of "Communism." For, if it cannot destroy, or reduce the discordant elements that subsist (more or less) in every man and woman, to peace, contentment, satisfaction, tranquillity, and thankfulness—true harmony—as well as possess every member of the Community equally with all things necessary to this life, it must be because "Philosophy," or the full knowledge (and use thereof) of the cause & cure of the evils by which mankind are so afflicted & divided, does not exist in the Community.

I am inclined to believe that "Communism, in even its best form, is only a compromise between a true earthly order of

society, and the spiritual order, that has been (as it were) held in reserve for those whose interior faculties shall be so developed and unfolded, that not any thing, however good and necessary, which pertains merely to this initial or rudimental state of existence, can give rest, comfort, & satisfaction to the yearning spirit, which needs, and must have, heavenly food for its sustentation, or die; riches, family, friends, and even "Philosophy," to the contrary notwithstanding. [And I very much doubt whether it was the intention (speaking after the manner of men) of God, in the beginning of creation, that humans should live in any other than family order. That is, that husband & wife, and father and mother, and children, should form the household, or home — "sweet home." Indeed, were this order of society maintained truly and properly, there would necessarily be satisfaction and enjoyment, as well as "plenty." For the forms of govern-

ment which God at first established among humans, and which, doubtless, was intended to be perpetual, was strictly parental.

O the depth of the folly of mankind, which has led, and still leads, them to prefer stupid, flesh-mongering, diamond-worshiping Shahs,* and ungodly, selfish, proud, oppressive, cruel, and murderous (warring) monarchs of other titles — worshipers of Shahs and Sex† — to rule over them, and treasure up enormous hoards of riches so superabundantly and easily, from the hard earnings of their poor toiling subjects, and almost entirely displace‡ the true and blessed God-originated order, so widely and beneficently given to mankind, for the government, protection, and sustaining of human posterity, the parental!

God is dual — male & female; and, when it pleased the Eternal Twain to create, an evidence and proof of their Pa-

(*†‡ See Notes, on pages 18 to 24.)

Order
ental, was established; for from them proceeded, and proceeds, all spiritual subsistencies, and (some would say) all materiality too, with which to clothe or organize spiritual beings. God, therefore, is presented to all intelligences as the First Father and Mother, who know nothing of caprice or partiality, or of the exercise of any arbitrary power in the government of their intelligent creatures, angelic or human; but in pure love and wisdom have established laws for mind as well as matter; and these laws are constitutionally inherent in the very nature of the works of God, and are irrevocable & immutable in both matter and mind; and cannot but operate for the promotion of the well-being and happiness of all who will be obedient thereto, in submission to the will of God, as made manifest in and by those laws; but unavoidably otherwise towards the disobedient; for the laws, and

the penalties for infractions thereof, are immediately and indissolubly united — not arbitrarily, but necessarily. This I designate "The Harmonial Philosophy" of God, whose government of all his creatures, in all worlds, and in all heavens, is strictly Parental. And how else could human beings, in their infancy, childhood, and youth, be protected from evils, supplied with food and raiment, and properly trained, unless the government and care of them were parental? For, who can understand and anticipate the necessities of children so well as their parents? and who could be found so ready to supply them. And who will, or can, so readily and efficiently sympathize in the afflictions and sufferings of children and juniors, and so cheerfully minister to them, as their parents. In these things, the nature of God is made lucidly manifest as the prototype of all good. And right and proper parents govern and

to all these things — yea, live — for their children, in unselfish love; and, as compensation, the love and confidence of children so cared for, flow back to their parents. This is "Harmonial Philosophy."

God also governs exclusively in & by love and wisdom; and in love supplies the wants of all his creatures. In fact, God, as Father and Mother, lives for the promotion of the well-being and felicity of all sentient creation. And no other definition could so appropriately be given Him, as "God is Love."

But there is yet a higher & much more perfect order of human society than this awaiting souls even in this world; just as much superior to it as spirit & mind are superior to matter, and as heaven is superior to earth. For, although the perfect natural order would yield large supplies of bliss, mental and physical; yet it would still be only natural, & would pertain to only this mundane, rudimental state of existence, and must be interrupted by time &

changes consequent upon the departure of souls into the spirit world. And, as a perfect, natural order would be a good preparation for a spiritual and heavenly order upon earth; so will this last & highest order be a good preparation for the Angelical Order of the heavens above the spirit world. This superior order, however, must be established on the same principle as that of the perfect natural order. That is, its government must be Parental.

But so tardy have been and is the development & ascension of the interior spiritual qualities of humans from the gross, sensuous, sensual, and selfish conditions in which they are groveling, yet foolishly looking for a remedy in elements and associations similar to those to which they are indebted for their present earthliness of mind, that it is difficult to cause them, except in very few cases, to understand, and then only very imperfectly, what is meant by an interior spiritual, or heavenly

order of society, which, equally with the natural order, requires father & mother, and children, to constitute it a family, or order.

Of course the parents of a perfect spiritual order must themselves have arisen from and above all the corrupt elements of a soul-defiling world — pride, anger, envy, lust (of the flesh & mind), covetousness, enmity, ambition, the love of power, ease, and position, &c; — and must possess within themselves the principles of goodness, purity (of flesh & spirit), truth, & wisdom, and all the graces of the Spirit spoken of, & possessed by, Jesus Christ and his Apostles, so that they may (as well as supply the physical necessities) impregnate with heavenly principles, souls that are really hungering and thirsting for the knowledge of the true and right way of a true life in righteousness, and, step by step, lead them on till they shall be spiritually matured, and fitted to become (in this world, or the spirit world) hea-

venly parents to other souls, who will have to render as strict obedience to their teachings as they rendered to their parents before them.

This, I suppose our friend Gardner would call "despotism". But I would ask: Who has more right & power of control over humans, than God our Eternal Parents? And who has more power and right of control over children in the natural order, than their parents? And who has more power, inclination, and will, to protect, guide, bless, & provide for, their spiritual children, than pure, unselfish, heavenly-minded, spiritual parents? If despotism is the best term by which to speak of this Millennial form of government, why, then say it is "despotic." But I call it "Harmonial Philosophy" of the very highest order.

Now, friend Editor, I think I have written about as much upon this subject as you will care to find room for in the pages of "Human Nature," although the

subject, in any mind, is very far from being exhausted. But, in concluding I will just observe, for the information of your numerous intelligent readers, and "all the world" besides, that this Spiritual & heavenly form of government — this "Harmonial Philosophy" — is in operation to-day, and has been for near a century, in the United Society of Shakers, in the United States of America. I do not, however, by any means, pretend to say, that the Order, or the people thereof, are yet perfect; but I do boldly & confidently testify that it is most certainly the beginning, upon earth, of a perfect spiritual and heavenly Order of society. Even now, the principles, virtues, and lives, of its members, already lift it far — very far — above all other religious institutions and Communities. Their motto is Increase! Increase! in truth, goodness, purity, unity, "equality," heavenliness, and God-like love!

I say, Blessed Harmonial Philoso-

phy!" — "the Babe that shall grow up to be the Saviour of the world" from its wickedness, falsies, cruelties, poverty, degradation, and misery — mental and physical; and from ignorance and error; and that shall impart peace, satisfaction, enjoyment, and lasting — yea, everlasting — good to all, male and female, who will submit to its purifying and conserving dictates and genial influences.

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* Note 1. — To whose beastly, concubinal, and polygamous company, there ought to have been felt, at least by all the modest, educated, and well-conducted Mothers and Daughters in England, from the Queen and Princesses downwards, and by all the Ecclesiastics, and by all Religionists, indeed, by every decent person, an overflowing amount of the most positive repugnance and disgust; especially as they all think the best, a most fitting place for a British subject who should have only two wives at the same

common
time, is a jail, to which they would surely
commit him for the crime of polygamy.
How much better than such a prisoner is a
Persian monarch with numerous wives
and concubines? ~~A person known by~~

And, if it be true, that the character of a
man is known by the company he keeps:
then, what is the character of those male
monarchs, and presidents and princes,
who have so "graciously" sought the
company of, and (at great national
cost) so readily fraternized with, a
man as low in his moral character
as must necessarily be one who keeps a
harem of twenty or thirty (or more)
wives and concubines?

his private treasury, while his own poor
subjects,
by thousands, were (through the famine in
Persia) starving to death; and that not
two years ago?

Foolish a creature, however, as is the Shah, recently in London, may possibly be forgiven. But how will, or can, an intelligent lot of Christian(!) Reuters of the intelligence of England be pardoned for squandering the tax extorted money, which should go to the feeding, clothing, and housing of their poor, aged, infirm, and destitute fellow-beings, "in honor" (Pshaw!) of him of whom it is said, he — this very Shah — hoarded up and held millions of money in his private treasury, while his own poor subjects, by thousands, were (through the famine in Persia) starving to death; and that not two years ago?

† Note 2.

2nd – Were George IV. (instead of Victoria I.) on the throne of England, this very costly visit of the Shah might not have been so wonderful; for, with the same adulation paid to him, by his retinue of the great and little folks about him, as has been (by Victoria's authority – a tacit, though noisy, approval of the domestic habits of her distinguished foreign guest) dubbed upon a Persian Keeper of a Harem, would he not have induced his obsequious flunkies to allow him, who was so ardently attached to (not Caroline, but) "wine and women", to establish for himself (of course at the nation's expense) a similar institution?

Luckily the Queen is a woman, or possibly another "Marble Arch" palace, contiguous to the Pimlico Royal Residence, would be erected, into which, of course, only eunuchs, "Maids of Honor!" and the

Christian(!) King — Head of the Church of England! (what must a body be with such a Head?) — should be admitted; and where he could be worshiped by all the Big (and little) idolaters of Europe, as the Shah of Great Britain!!

Let the voice of Reproof and Censure, through the Pulpit & Press, be trumpet-tongued, by every enlightened, honest, and chaste mind throughout the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and all her Dependencies.

‡ Note 3.

It must be admitted, that there are some slight (and only slight) semblances of the true parental order to be seen, and those in but a very few families, scattered here and there. But the great mass of humanity are at a vast distance from that order, as designed of God. The consequence is, that, when maturity is reached, there are scarcely any, perhaps in all England, that are willing, as adults, to ascend into the higher

form of that order, where the best, and wisest, and kindest of the Community should have the responsibility of providing every thing for, and counseling, and guiding, all who (and protecting) should commit themselves to their mild, free, and impartial government, and who should have the power to call upon the wisest and best of the members (male and female) to assist in bearing the various onerous burthens which would be incident to this more perfect order of society.

Marriages, and provisions for the formation of family homes, outside of the Community, and all other important business matters, should be subject to the entire control of such of them as should be appointed by the chief rulers (male and female) to those particular departments. Education, in all necessary and mind-expanding knowledges, would of course be carefully attended to.

Such an order of society — Parental I will call it — would require more perfect

bedience and submission, from its members, than could be rendered by children to their parents in the family orders. This form of "Communism" would be true and real (not "imaginary") Harmonial Philosophy." Yet many (friend Garner included) would be very likely to call it a "despotic government;" although anyperson can see there would be less of despotism thinking connected with it than exists in parents over their children.

Let some philosophers and kind-hearted philanthropic lovers of their neighbors — like "Randolphs," alias Deuys — labor to bring such a Community into existence; and succeeding they will be, by mankind generally, pronounced the Great Benefactors of Humanity.

Friend Editor, I have simply dropt these ideas, thinking, perhaps some of the readers of this article might ask: How shd we manage, after leaving the home of our progenitors, to continue the parental order?

Were I to say more upon this subject, it would make the article (already longer than I intended) much too long for your publication. Moreover, "A word to the wise is sufficient."

William Offord.

Mount Lebanon, N.Y.

July 16, 1873.

A. Gardner's Articles

"Individualism v. Communism.

"To the Editor of Human Nature.

"Sir, — Some parties in New Zealand are going to develop another New Harmony, and are looking out for persons of a suitable disposition, cash, and other qualifications, who will go into the speculation at once. As a sine qua non, such persons must be harmonial philosophers, and they must renounce all private trading, &c. Happily they will not be compelled to celibacy, or polygamy, or anything ultra in that direction. But it appears there has to be auricular confession, besides. I fear, a good deal else not exactly what everybody now-a-days seems to like. We are trying to expunge the old doctrines of the church, not to revive them, I hope, in a new form, as some spiritualists have tried to do over and over again, but generally fail.

"Will any of your readers, who have time & genius sufficient, try to explain to me, and all the world, what is meant by the Harmonial Philosophy? The claimant would say it was Greek. I think it is something imaginary, and not at all suited as the foundation of a colony.

"Now, seriously, friend Burns, this State of Communism is the very thing we want to get rid of, not to cherish and foster it, as if it were some darling baby who would grow up to be the Saviour of the world. I am here too much of a Communist per force. What I need is more freedom, not more bondage. The burdens of taxation are here felt to be an evil we would gladly avoid, as we are conscious that a great deal is misspent. But under that system we would have to groan, being burdened with all our earnings going where we had no control over them, unless we happened to be at the head of the establishment. Will any man be better or happier to know that what he works

for will be taken care of by somebody else, or used, it may be, for some purpose the rightful owner would not think of. If Spiritualists want to emigrate and form colonies, why not do so on the principle of Individualism? — "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" will apply and work far better that way than under the hampering influence of communistic government. You love yr neighbor best by letting him have his own way in managing his own affairs. And he that wants to manage the affairs of another is only seeking rule and domination where fraternity and liberty should exist. If you want to buy land in a block and settle on it, either in Australia, New Zealand, or anywhere else — do so, and let each pay for the quantity he wishes to appropriate. Machinery and utensils of all sorts might be purchased in the same way; even buildings might be erected by united means and efforts, on the principle of limited respon-

sibility. I cannot tell what any man should require more in this world, or the next either, than to have his own way; and that, in my opinion, is only attainable on the principle of Individualism and the extinction of all governments. Communism is a system of government more binding than all other kinds of rule, however despotic, and should never be seriously mooted among wise men as likely to prove of any use to Spiritualists. It has often enough been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

"Let us have liberty and fraternity, and let the devil take equality, for there is no such thing possible under the sun.

"A. Gardner."

N. B. The foregoing Article is from the June No. of "Human Nature," 1873, which I have copied verbatim et literatum.

W. O.

William Offord